The Signal experience

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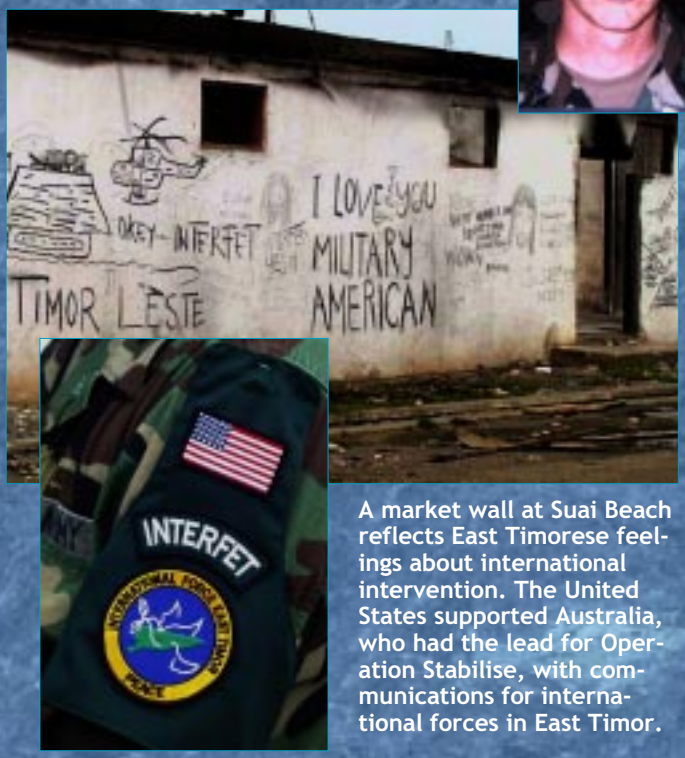
"I was battle captain for an echelons-above-corps unit deployed in support of international forces in East Timor. I monitored the communications network, directed troubleshooting, updated information to Pacific Command's J-6 and oversaw logistical coordinations between Australia and East Timor. I worked with tri-band and gained a broad base of experiences in communications.

"One of the problems I faced was ensuring priority of equipment in a multinational environment – for example, U.S. priority vs. French priority. Another problem was the possibility of being bumped off the satellite to provide more bandwidth for a warfighter exercise occurring at the same time.

"From this deployment I increased my knowledge of EAC and tactical communications systems. I did well in getting EAC support to people when they needed it, and I have a feeling of pride in supporting multinational forces aiding the development of a new democracy."



A market wall at Suai Beach reflects East Timorese feelings about international intervention. The United States supported Australia, who had the lead for Operation Stabilise, with communications for international forces in East Timor.

the information-systems operations piece (installation, operation and maintenance) of the information exchange; FA 24 officers engineer the networks (telecommunication and data communication) portion of the information pipeline; and FA 53 officers manage the information systems (mostly computer systems and LANs) to ensure needed information is provided to the right decision-maker.

Signal Regiment officers combine technical and tactical expertise to provide decision-makers with communications, data and other multimedia instruments to gain information dominance on the battlefield. They integrate information systems (military and commercial) that provide real-time data to higher, lower and adjacent units almost simultaneously. Whether it's through videoteleconferencing, mobile subscriber equipment, fax, email or commercial access, Regimental officers ensure the information gets to the right place at the right time.

Regiment's functional areas

FA 24 is a functional area in the information operations career field. Telecommunication-systems engineering officers provide the Army with a core of professional engineers to support the nation's full-spectrum-dominance strategy for the 21st century. FA 24 officers engineer, design, develop, install, implement, integrate, test, accept and upgrade telecommunication systems and networks supporting Army, joint, combined and DoD operations worldwide.

FA 24 officers must have a bachelor or master of science degree in electrical engineering, telecommunications engineering, math, physics or a related discipline.

FA 53 is also a functional area in the IO CF. Information-systems management officers provide the Army with a core of professional managers and engineers to support the nation's full-spectrum-dominance strategy for the 21st century. FA 53 officers plan, manage, administer and maintain computer systems, computer networks and associated information-technology resources supporting Army, joint, combined and DoD operations worldwide. Also, IT officers may apply computer engineering, computer science and software engineering theory and principles to design, develop, install, implement, integrate, test and accept computer hardware, software, systems and networks.

Officers from all branches who meet specific undergraduate education requirements are eligible for FA designation into either FA 24 or FA 53 during their fifth year of service. After completing company command, officers may receive state-of-the-art training, followed by an assignment within their FA.